



ENERGY

\$90M solar plant near Tucson to power PayPal, ASU

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Story Highlights

APS dedicated a \$90 million solar plant Wednesday

ASU and PayPal will buy the power from the facility to offset grid power they use

The plant has a capacity of 40 megawatts, enough for about 10,000 homes at once

Arizona Public Service Co. dedicated a \$90 million solar power plant 35 miles north of Tucson on Wednesday that will supply power for PayPal and Arizona State University.

PayPal and ASU entered an agreement with APS to purchase the power from the 40-megawatt Red Rock Power Plant.

ASU and PayPal will pay a premium for the renewable-energy credits from the plant in a deal approved by utility regulators at the Arizona Corporation Commission.

"ASU and PayPal are purchasing the equivalent output of the Red Rock Generating Station as a means of furthering their corporate and institutional renewable energy/carbon free/sustainability goals," said Daniel Froetscher, APS senior vice president of transmission, distribution and customers.

Power from the plant won't go directly to ASU and PayPal, but the power they purchase from the facility is meant to compensate for traditional utility-grid power used at their facilities.

Apple has a similar solar arrangement with neighboring utility Salt River Project.

The Red Rock Power Plant is on 400 acres of land near the Saguaro natural-gas fired power plant. The location allows the solar facility to take advantage of existing transmission lines and utility infrastructure, Froetscher said.

The plant has solar panels on tracking devices to follow the sun from east to west across the sky. Its 40-megawatt capacity is enough electricity to power about 10,000 homes at once, when sun is shining on the panels.

It took 15 months to build, with McCarthy Construction acting as general contractor.

"We view it as a nice win, win, win," Froetscher said.

While ASU has several solar projects across its campuses in metro Phoenix, this is the first for PayPal, which has a data center in central Phoenix, said Daniel Torunian, PayPal vice president of core platform and infrastructure.

The power purchased from PayPal's share of the Red Rock plant will be equivalent to about 75 percent of the power used by the data center, he said. The company purchases additional renewable-energy credits from APS to offset 100 percent of the center's energy use with renewables, he said.

"This is our only facility where we are using this model at this time," Torunian said.